



COVID-19 HITS WORKPLACES
AS TORIES FIDDLE FIGURES

RISKS OF UNSAFE RETURN SHOWN BY OUTBREAKS
>>PAGES 5 and 18 HOW MANY DEAD? >>PAGE 6



WORKERS SHAKE
BELARUS REGIME

PEOPLE DEMAND SYSTEM
CHANGE >>PAGE 8

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2718 | 19 - 25 August 2020 | socialistworker.co.uk

PROTESTS FORCE U-TURN



EXPULSION OF EXAM CHEATS

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

How street movement defeated plan to rob the poorest students >>Pages 4&5

UNEMPLOYMENT

Fightback is
needed against
jobs massacre

BRITAIN IS heading for unemployment levels “not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s”, a think tank has warned.

But workers at Debenhams stores are not just letting jobs go. They have held protests against their bosses’ imposition of mass redundancies.

>>Page 7

HEALTH



**Building the NHS
pay revolt can
beat the Tories**

HEALTH WORKERS plan rallies outside hospitals across Britain on Wednesday of next week to demand a pay rise.

The rallies are the latest action in a grassroots revolt over the Tories’ pay insult.

NHS workers were clapped—and then given no pay rise.

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HISTORY

Scottsboro—a
case that put
racism on trial

WHEN NINE black teenagers were falsely accused of raping two white women in the US Deep South in 1931, most expected they’d suffer the death sentence.

But they had reckoned without the power of a mass campaign.

>>Pages 14&15



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'New immigration laws will send the left into meltdown'

Home secretary Priti Patel according to a leak from a Zoom meeting with Tory MPs

'The stock market is up almost 300 points again today'

US president Donald Trump on the day that 1,503 people died from coronavirus in the US, the highest number of deaths for three months

'Anything is possible when you're making it up as you go along'

A senior Tory minister tells the Financial Times newspaper about the government's exam strategy

'There is not a lawyer or police officer in the land who any longer knows what is legal and not legal under coronavirus regulations'

David Allen Green, a widely-respected legal commentator



How super-rich buy their way out of the coronavirus crisis

THE SUPER-RICH are buying citizenship in countries with lower coronavirus rates in order to protect their health.

CNN News reported, "These so-called citizen-by-investment programs, or CIPs, are currently a growth industry, as are residence-by-investment arrangements, also known as 'golden visas'."

CIP participants tend to have a net worth of anywhere from \$2 million to over \$50 million.

Dominic Volek, head of Asia for global citizenship and residence advisory firm Henley & Partners, said, "New Zealand has come out on top in terms of how it handled the pandemic, compared with some of the other usually more favoured destinations like Britain or the US."

"So we've definitely seen

a big increase in inquiries in the Australia and New Zealand investment visas."

Australia's programme costs between £750,000 to £2.6 million, while New Zealand will set investors back £1.5 to £5 million.

"New Zealand's programme is pretty flexible in terms of what you invest

in," explained Volek. "A lot of these people have put that money into creating a completely self-sustainable, off-grid commercial farm. So then they've also got a place to go and just wait things out in times like these."

As for those who want to stay, a report in Vanity Fair showed how

the rich protect themselves. "One investor worth several billion who has several homes told a friend that he was in Miami when the numbers were lowest at the start of the pandemic, hopped over to Los Angeles when Florida got a bit dicey—and now that California is a hotbed, is in New York enjoying the season's outdoor dining."

"Another billionaire in Los Angeles has been hosting dinner parties where a nurse administers 15-minute coronavirus tests outside as guests drink cocktails, and allows them in to dine once their test comes back negative."

"Another investor told me some of his colleagues chipped in for a massive \$50,000-a-month compound in Palm Springs that's being used as a group party house."

IT IS always safe for the have yachts

WHO GAINS from the sudden declarations that other countries are unsafe and people returning from them will have to self-isolate? As the government said 4am on Saturday was the deadline to get back from France, prices soared. British Airways was charging £452 for a direct flight from Paris to London Heathrow on Friday night. The same journey on Saturday was £66.

Pricey

"DID JEREMY Corbyn's Marxist henchman Seumas Milne infect Boris Johnson AND Dominic Cummings with coronavirus during Downing Street visit?"

So the Mail on Sunday is still finding things to blame on Corbyn.

"The Mail on Sunday has established that on the evening of March 16 MrCorbyn visited Mr Johnson at No 10 with his most senior adviser, former Guardian journalist Seumas Milne." Damning.

Tories cut free school meals to migrants

THE TORIES are preparing to withdraw free school meals from the children of migrants in England who are currently ineligible for public support, charities say.

During the coronavirus outbreak the meal scheme has temporarily included some pupils whose families have "no recourse to public funds" (NRPF).

The government said this would continue only while Covid-19 "impacts schools".

In a letter to education secretary Gavin Williamson, last week 60 charities, unions and other groups said they were "extremely concerned by the government's intention".

Analysis by Oxford University's Migration

Observatory suggests that more than 175,000 children in Britain live in NRPF families.

Sam Royston, director of policy and research for the Children's Society, said that those figures showed the number of children affected was rising.

"Whether a child is able to eat should not depend on their parents' immigration status," he said.

Not for migrants

Labour branches told not to discuss antisemitism

LOCAL LABOUR Party organisations have been cleared by the leadership to meet online.

So new general secretary David Evans has written to them telling them what they are not allowed to discuss.

He said, "I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a few pertinent issues."

"This will ensure that the business your local party is conducting is appropriate."

The email went on to bar constituencies from debating or voting on motions about either Keir Starmer's decision to pay around £600,000 in

legal fees and to former staff who accused the party of antisemitism, or the party's adoption of the IHRA definition and examples of antisemitism.

Evans added, "The IHRA definition of antisemitism and its examples was properly adopted by the Labour Party in September 2018."

"CLPs and branches have no powers to overturn this decision."

David Evans

Charity begins at Spurs

TOTTENHAM Hotspur football club was proud to announce during lockdown that it would allow its air-conditioned basement car park to be used as a food hub to store supplies for vulnerable people.

Now a Freedom of Information request flagged up to Private Eye magazine that Haringey council had paid for it. "These costs were £1,680 per week for additional security and £880 per week for additional cleaning," it said.

Spurs said it had been approached by the council, which wanted to absorb any excess cost to the club.

As one supporters' blog puts it, "This food bank business has turned out to be one very strange act of kindness, as Tottenham's charity looks like it came with a zero net spend."

Thank you, you're fired

IN MAY HSBC bank launched a series of ads featuring workers telling customers, "We're here to support you."

The bank added its own message saying, "We want to say a big thank you to all our HSBC UK colleagues who continue to go above and beyond to support our customers."

Come August and HSBC boss Noel Quinn said the company will "accelerate" an earlier restructuring plan which included axing 35,000 jobs.

Trump shower moan over hair

THE US government could change the definition of a showerhead because of Donald Trump's hair.

US showerheads can't produce more than 2.5 gallons of water per minute by law.

Now the Department of Energy proposed changing the law.

Trump whined last month that it isn't enough.

"So showerheads—you take a shower, the water doesn't come out," he said.

"You want to wash your hands, the water doesn't come out."

"So what do you do? You just stand there longer? Because my hair—I don't know about you, but it has to be perfect. Perfect."

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Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

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Newsdesk 020 7840 5656
Circulation 020 7840 5601



Write to Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London E16 9EJ

Racist ‘illegal’ pushbacks put migrants’ lives at risk

AT LEAST 1,072 refugees have been left to die at sea by the Greek coastguard since March this year.

The Greece government follows the same racist logic as Boris Johnson.

Greek authorities crammed refugees from detention centres into overcrowded life rafts, and left them at the edge of the country’s territorial waters.

These murderous manoeuvres took place on at least 31 different occasions, according to analysis by the New York Times (NYT) newspaper.

One Syrian refugee, Najma al-Khatib, said she was taken from a detention centre on the island of Rhodes.

Najma told the NYT that she and 22 others, including babies, were left on a “rudderless, motorless life raft”. “I left Syria for fear of bombing—but when this happened, I wished I’d died under a bomb,” she said.

The group was eventually rescued by the Turkish coastguard.

Francois Crepeau is a former United Nations special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. He said the Greek authorities’ policy was a “human rights and humanitarian disaster”.

Law

“These pushbacks are totally illegal in all their aspects, in international law and in European law,” he said.

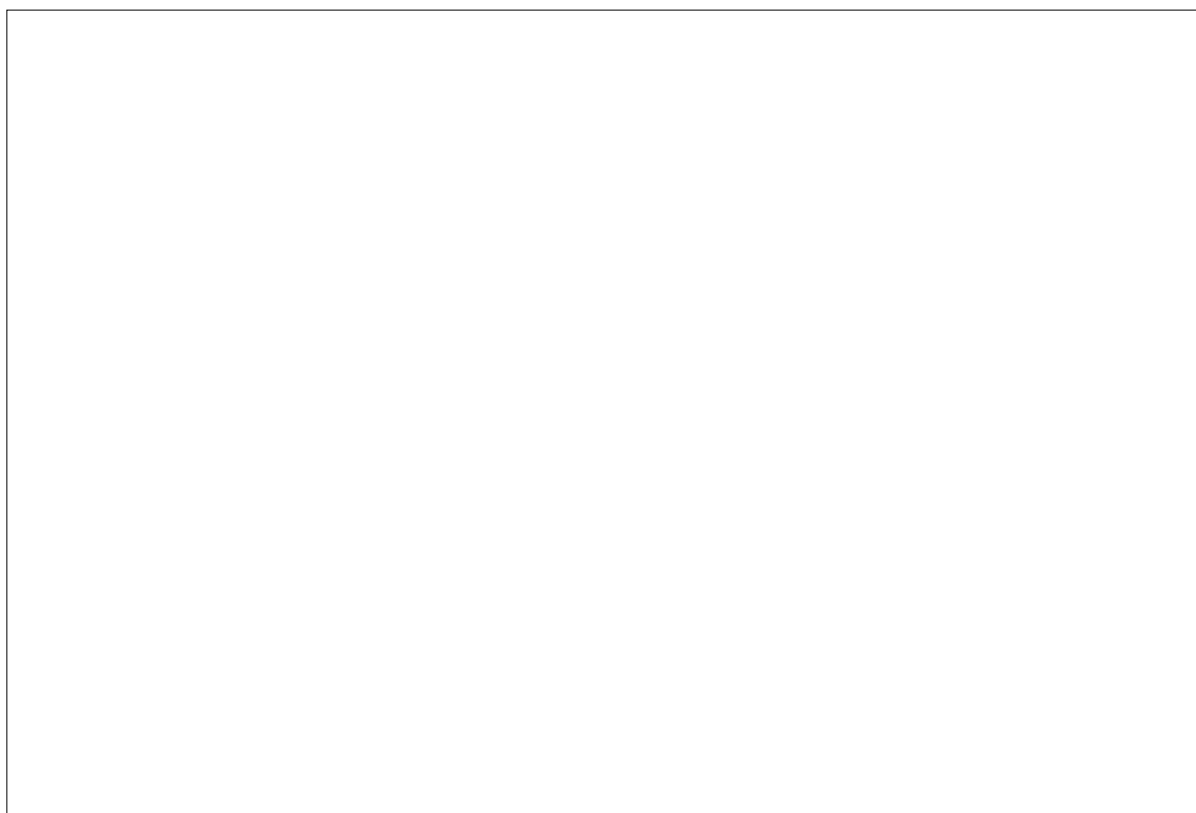
But this is what the Tories want like to do to refugees coming from France to Britain.

The European Union’s border regime, known as Fortress Europe, has turned the Mediterranean Sea into a mass grave.

Those refugees who make it to Europe face racism, detention centres and squalid living conditions.

Around 600 refugees live in makeshift camps across northern France and Belgium.

The Tory government plans to make life deadlier for refugees who



REFUGEES CROSSING the English Channel—the Tories want to make them even less safe

BACK STORY

Boris Johnson wants to make life even harder for refugees

● The Tories want the power to ‘push back’ migrants who cross the English Channel from France

● This would put many more desperate refugees’ lives at risk

● Over 1,000 people have died as a result of pushbacks by the authorities in Greece recently

● Tory MPs are using racist language to dehumanise migrants

● But it isn’t illegal to cross the Channel and claim asylum

try to cross the English Channel. Johnson said that the Tories would “look at the legal framework” to make it easier to deport people.

He complained, “When people do get here, it is very, very difficult to send them away again, even though blatantly they’ve come here illegally.”

This is based on racist lies about “illegal migrants”, the language used to dehumanise people.

Anne McLaughlin, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, said it’s “not illegal for people to cross the Channel” and claim asylum.

A letter signed by 25 Tory MPs

and Lords called for tougher action against refugees. They claimed, “It is strikingly clear that, rather than a ‘hostile environment’, invading migrants have been welcomed.”

Tory MP John Hayes claimed that the number of crossings from France had reached “really extraordinary numbers”.

France and Germany take more than twice as many asylum seekers as Britain.

The refugees trapped in northern France have fled war and dictatorships, that have often been supported by the West. The only solution is to open the border and let them in safely.

Black Lives Matter in Brighton

AROUND 1,500 people took to the streets of Brighton to demand Black Lives Matter (BLM) last Saturday.

Speakers included Michael Abatan, brother of Jay Abatan who died after a racist attack in the city in 1999. Sussex police were criticised over the investigations and no one has been convicted.

On the same day hundreds of people joined a BLM march in Bristol. It was the first BLM protest in the city since protesters tore down the statue of slaver Edward Colston in June.

Chants of, “Black Lives Matter” and, “Silence is violence” rang out.

Meanwhile, around 180 people marched against racism in the small town of Bonnyrigg, near Edinburgh.

Campaigner

Violence has already forced Debora Kayembe, a refugee from the Congo and prominent civil rights campaigner, to move house.

Debora said, “One night, a mob of ten teenagers stood outside our home and chanted, ‘Go home! Go home!’

“My daughter was once called ‘ebola soup’ and my son’s class chanted ‘n****r’ in his face.”

Protesters heard speeches from politicians, Stand Up To Racism, Black Lives Matter and community activists, and a pastor. None were as powerful as the words of Debora’s 15 year old daughter and Debora herself.

The case is receiving a lot of attention in the media.

But the fact that nothing has been done, despite numerous reports to the police of racial abuse, shows the need to keep fighting.

Thanks to Donny Gluckstein

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- Save 07377 632 826 as Socialist Worker WhatsApp
- Send ‘start’ to the number



IN THIS WEEK

1989

Marchioness river crash kills 51

A pleasure cruiser, the Marchioness, crashed into a barge on the River Thames on 20 August 1989.

The Tories refused to hold a public inquiry into the disaster.



Actions by students push Tories into exam backtrack

by SADIE ROBINSON

FURY AND student protests forced the Tories into a humiliating U-turn on the exams grading scandal this week.

A-Level, AS Level and GCSE students in England and Wales will now receive teacher assessed grades, instead of grades determined by a dodgy algorithm.

The news will be an enormous relief to students and it vindicates all those who protested. But it isn't enough.

Other qualifications, such as Btecs, are not affected by the U-turn. Disgraced education secretary Gavin Williamson is still in his position.

And the Tories' refusal to act quickly enough means many students have already lost university places.

The algorithm saw more than 40 percent of A-Level grades downgraded.

Students in poorer areas were much harder hit than those at private schools.

Endured

Students endured days of stress and confusion while the Department for Education (DfE) defended the system. Many now face even more uncertainty.

It isn't clear whether students who were rejected from their first-choice university on the basis of their algorithm grades will now be able to go there.



Gavin Williamson

Williamson didn't even announce the U-turn. Instead, the Tories let the chair of exams regulator Ofqual do the apologising.

And despite all the failings of the education system, Williamson has continued to defend it.

"At every stage DfE and Ofqual have put the interests of the most disadvantaged young people at the heart of what it does," he claimed on Tuesday. It's a lie.

Williamson should go now. And students should keep fighting to scrap a shoddy exams system that operates to keep working class students down.

At a London protest last week, Btec student Glen told Socialist Worker, "The reason I was able to do all this studying is the teachers. They should listen to the teachers, instead of an algorithm."

Yet as things stood on Socialist Worker went to press, Glen won't benefit from the U-turn.

School students across England and Wales receive their GCSE results on Thursday.

The algorithm was estimated to have downgraded 97 percent of grades.

Teacher assessed grades will generally be higher than those determined by the algorithm.

But even using teacher assessed grades instead isn't perfect.

Some teachers have described being "bullied" into downgrading them by school management.

And some students say their teachers didn't expect as much from them because they are poor or black.

The Tories will hope their U-turn will draw a line under the scandal. They can't be allowed to get away with it.

We need to keep up the pressure to make the Tories pay for the chaos—and to win long-term changes to the exam system.

"I didn't go to Eton," Glen told a protest rally last week. "I'm a former foster kid. When I came to do my GCSEs I was in a shit position. But I dug myself out."

"Now all that goes down the drain because of a postcode."



STUDENTS TOOK to the streets last week

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

'We just want what we deserve'—angry students lead protests

FURIOUS PROTESTS burst out across Britain in response to the A-Level downgrading scandal.

And students still planned to hold protests—even after the U-turn was announced.

On Sunday, over 1,000 students held a "sit-in" in London's Parliament Square.

It followed a 200-strong protest from Hyde Park to the Department for Education (DfE) and a march from Downing Street to the DfE on Friday.

Ali Khan from Walthamstow, east London, told Socialist Worker, "For me this is the difference between a pass and a fail, and the loss of my university place. "I don't know what I'm going to do now. But I'm not just here for me. I'm here for every single person who has lost out over this."

Naomi James-Mitchell, who goes to school in Westminster, said the downgrading is about

poverty and racism. "I'm a black student at a state school so they don't expect much from me," she told Socialist Worker.

Naomi said she got A's, As and a B in her GCSEs, but had been given BCDD in her A-Levels.

In Liverpool, over 100 school students and supporters demanded the Tories do a U-turn over the downgrading scandal. Students chanted, "Don't lower our score because we're poor."

Students also protested in Coventry and Cardiff on Sunday. Many more protests are planned for this week.

There is a strong sense of class outrage on the protests. In London students chanted, "Grades, not postcodes" and, "No Tories, no cheats, no Eton elites."

Shanaj from Tower Hamlets, east London, told Socialist Worker, "They've suppressed our futures."

"People from deprived areas have the ability to get As and A's, but they've been given to students in private schools."

"Gavin Williamson said it isn't fair to give us 'inflated' grades. But we aren't asking for inflated grades—we just want what we deserve."

Btec vocational student Glen from Wandsworth in south London said he'd been "bloody devastated" when he got his results. "I was predicted a distinction, distinction, merit and I got a merit, merit, pass," he told Socialist Worker.

"It's no secret why. The places that normally do well are the places that are well funded. It's all about postcode."

Exam Justice Now—Sack Tory Exam Cheat—protest Friday 21 August, 12 noon, Downing Street, central London



Message for the minister

Exams justify keeping the ruling class on top

CAPITALISM IS based on strict hierarchies that aim to keep people within the class they are born into. Exams help to justify this set-up.

We are told that if we don't do well it's our own fault. But poorer children are limited from a young age.

They are more likely to be put in lower-ability groups at school, or given less challenging work.

Some students aren't entered for exams that can get the highest grades as they aren't deemed capable of achieving them.

Class shapes our

whole lives. Poorer children are more likely to live in overcrowded housing, have fewer resources and poorer health. Their schools will be underfunded.

Just looking at a test result to judge someone's ability ignores all of this disadvantage.

Children born into the ruling class are taught to rule.

Rich parents pay sky high school fees so their kids get the best education. Kids at Eton have an average class size of less than eight.

Of course many working class children

do well at school. But that doesn't largely affect where people end up.

Even if toffs don't get the best grades, they glide into the top universities and jobs anyway. Working class children are more likely to remain poorer, regardless of education.

Exams are a way of stratifying people and legitimising the idea that certain people are naturally suited to certain roles.

They are part of a sham system designed to justify an unequal society. Under socialism, there will be no such exams.



Outside parliament last week

Regulator rejected offers of help in face of scandal

THE OFQUAL exams regulator ignored offers of expert help to work out how best to calculate grades.

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) wrote to Ofqual in April, suggesting

it take advice from experts. But Ofqual said it would only consider this if statisticians signed a non-disclosure agreement. This would stop them from commenting on its

final choice of model for five years after the results were released.

Sharon Witherspoon from the RSS said that had Ofqual accepted help the scandal "could have been averted".

Labour fails to challenge Tories

LABOUR'S response to the downgrading scandal was so appalling that even Alastair Campbell is unhappy.

Tony Blair's former liar-in-chief tweeted, "I am beyond rage at government incompetence."

"But I'm getting not far behind on rage front at @UKLabour inability to take them apart and force change on it."

Labour shadow education secretary Kate Green had said that no GCSE should be downgraded by more than two grades. It was a disgraceful position to take.

Labour should have said from the start that no grades should be downgraded at all.

At a time when the Tories are in dire crisis, Labour has utterly failed to

seize the chance to deepen it. Instead Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer wrote in the Mail on Sunday on the need for children to return to schools.

He echoed Boris Johnson's piece in the same newspaper the week before.

"I don't just want all children back at school next month, I expect them back at school," Starmer wrote.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

WORKPLACE OUTBREAKS UNDERLINE COVID RISKS

THE government has not conquered coronavirus, and its failed policies are increasing the risk of a deadly second wave. Ministers would like us to think the virus is effectively under control.

But new coronavirus infections have doubled in Birmingham within a week, with 321 new positive cases.

The city is teetering on the edge of a local lockdown after confirmed cases rose to around 30 people per 100,000.

And last Saturday Britain recorded its highest Saturday infection rate in eight weeks with 1,012 cases.

A further 1,040 infections were added to the tally on Sunday.

It's no secret why infections are rising. The Tories' drive to reopen the economy is leading increasing numbers of people into unsafe situations.

Workers are travelling together on public transport and spending time in offices or factories where social distancing isn't observed.

Yet the government is still pushing for English schools to reopen fully in September—regardless of the threat this poses

to workers and students.

Many parents, pupils and teachers want a return to school. But it has to be safe.

Two Scottish primary schools pupils tested positive for coronavirus this week, following a number of positive tests among secondary school students.

Three outbreaks at food processing plants over the past week show that the danger posed by Covid-19 has not gone away.

In Northampton, 299 workers at Greencore—which produces sandwiches for Marks and Spencer—tested positive for Covid-19 recently (see page 18). Yet production didn't stop.

At the 2 Sisters chicken factory

in Perthshire, doors were closed after four workers tested positive.

And 72 workers at the Bakkavor desserts factory in Nottinghamshire were found to have coronavirus after the firm tested 701 members of staff.

In April, operations manager Sean Madden was secretly recorded telling staff at a Bakkavor factory in North London that they would be fired if they failed to come to work.

He claimed the vast majority of workers absent during lockdown didn't have the virus and many "just didn't want to come in".

The recent outbreaks underline how workplaces can hotspots for the spread of disease.

And they also show the lengths bosses will go to in order to keep the cash rolling in.

Only a more robust testing and tracing system would reveal how widespread coronavirus really is.

But data for England shows that the outsourced NHS Test and Trace system is actually getting less effective.

From a failing contact tracing system to keeping workplaces open, those in charge are sticking to their deadly policies.

We can't trust the Tories.

“The Tories’ drive to reopen the economy is behind a rise in infections”

WE CAN BEAT THE TORIES

STUDENTS HAVE taught all of us a lesson in class war. Protest gets results.

We're up against a Tory government with an 80-seat majority, and Labour Party and trade union leaders who have been consistently missing in action.

But just over half a year after Boris Johnson marched into Downing Street, students have shown that the Tories can be beaten. And, despite the humiliating U-turn over exams

downgrading, they're keeping up the protests to win for students who are still done over.

The revolt isn't the first school students' movement to burst onto the street in the last year.

Earlier this year, school climate strikers forced action on climate chaos onto the agenda.

And many other fightbacks in the last year have also been totally apart from the leaders of the trade unions and Labour Party.

That's true of the Black Lives Matter movement and now the

health workers' revolt over pay (see page 20).

These should inspire us to take a wider fight to the Tories and bosses, who want a return to "business as usual".

It shows that resistance is most effective on the streets and workplaces, not based on manoeuvrings inside parliament or Labour.

We need to push union leaders to call strikes and protests. And, crucially, to organise wherever we can now—and not wait.

Breakfast in



Sign up to our morning newsletter Breakfast in Red and get the latest news every day.

For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred

Debenhams staff protest after mass redundancies

by SARAH BATES

AS UNEMPLOYMENT soars, a fight for jobs is crucial. Workers sacked by Debenhams are giving a glimpse of what's needed.

They held their second protest last Saturday following one a few days earlier when they were fired.

Sacked worker Laila Hassan told Socialist Worker, "We had speakers at the rally including workers who have just been made redundant."

"This was important because it gave people confidence that they can speak up and protest—they don't have to be silent."

Around 2,500 Debenhams workers were cruelly sacked by profiteering bosses on Tuesday of last week.

Laila said, "They've treated people horribly—the shock is very real."

Around 65 workers were invited by text onto a conference call.

They were told that they were being sacked and their jobs would be terminated in just three days' time.

Some workers had been employed there for up to 28 years.

"Workers were muted during the phone call, without any opportunity to ask questions," said Laila. "After the store manager read out a script, the call was terminated."

"The underhanded way the bosses have gone about it has made it worse," Melissa Forbes told Socialist Worker.

"There's no reason why they couldn't have called small groups of people into work."

"Instead, the phone kept cutting off and we couldn't hear half of what the store manager was saying."

Melissa said that bosses gave workers "no inkling" that redundancies were coming, and no explanation about who was chosen for redundancy and who was kept on.

Shock

And the shock decision will leave many minimum wage workers struggling to get by.

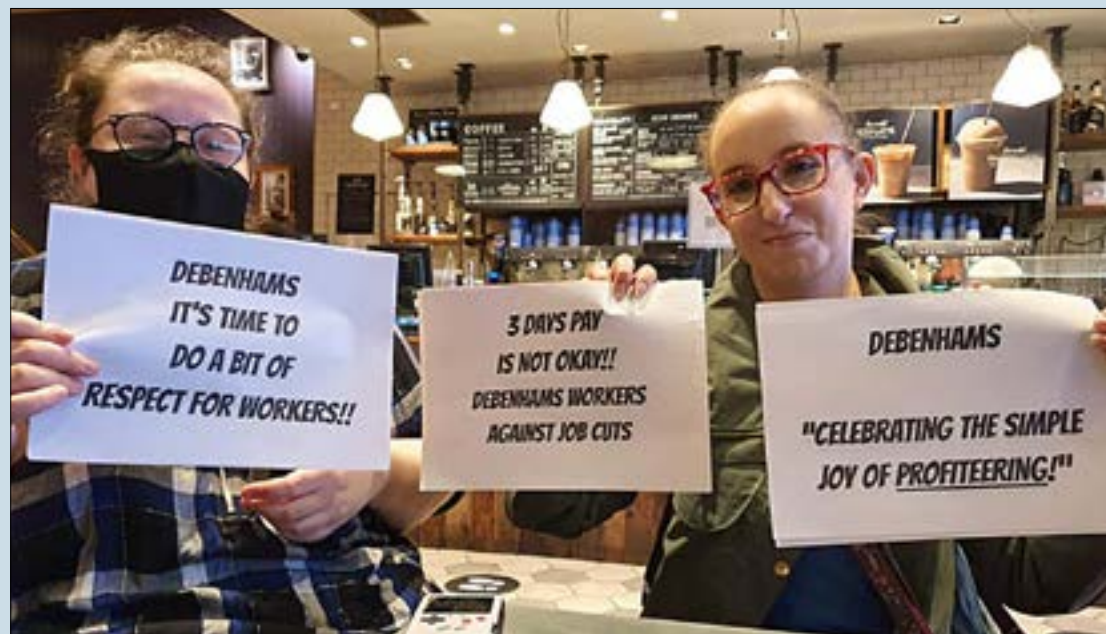
"Who knows how I'm going to pay the bills now—Universal Credit doesn't kick in for a number of weeks," said Melissa.

"There's been no help from management about how we move onto the next stage or how to find jobs."

This week's redundancies—and an earlier wave that claimed around 60 jobs—all happened without consultation with workers.

There was no transparency or communication with the workers' Usdaw union.

The latest round of redundancies comes after 4,000 job cuts since April—when Debenhams went into administration for the second time in a year.



DEBENHAMS WORKERS have held protests in Manchester over shock redundancies announced last week

PICTURES: MELISSA FORBES

In July, the firm put itself up for sale. But any buyout looks like it will come too late for Laila and her colleagues.

Laila said that protests were being held "because these job cuts didn't need to be made". "They're being made as a result of the furlough scheme being wound down," she explained.

"The government could be extending the furlough scheme. But Boris Johnson's government doesn't want to protect minimum wage workers like us."

A series of protests have taken place in Ireland against Debenhams following the closure of its stores in Dublin, Cork and Waterford.

Union leaders have to be pushed to match the mood of resistance shown by the Debenhams workers.

We can beat the landlords

PRIVATE LANDLORDS in England and Wales will be able to go to courts to begin eviction procedures against tenants from Monday of next week.

That's the day that an emergency moratorium on evictions ends.

It could see a rush of cases against people who have been unable to pay rent during the Covid-19 crisis, and a rise in homelessness.

Tenants need to organise urgently—it is possible to win.

Hundreds of families in temporary accommodation in east London heard last week that they will have their rent reduced by about

60 percent. It follows a four-year campaign against their corporate social landlord.

The London borough of Newham announced that "following a series of management issues" some 250 properties would be transferred back to council management.

They had been leased out by the council to the property management company Mears.

The families, who live in Custom House and Canning Town, had struggled to pay their rent, which they described as "sky high". This worsened during the lockdown.

But now they have shown that resistance can win.

Workers face a jobs massacre

BRITAIN IS heading for unemployment levels "not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s", a think tank has warned. It comes after the economy officially entered a recession.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the economy contracted by 20.4 percent last quarter. It's the deepest decline since records began in this form in 1955.

Tory chancellor Rishi Sunak said the figures "confirm that hard times are here".

The new analysis published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) suggests the worst could still be ahead.

More than two million jobs are predicted to go if the government's furlough scheme ends in October.

The IPPR said nearly three million will still be furloughed by October. It predicted that one million jobs will "be permanently lost" but said two million could be sustained in the hospitality, entertainment and construction sectors.

Unavoidable

IPPR associate director Clare McNeil said, "The chancellor has said he will never accept unemployment as an unavoidable outcome."

"But by ending the job retention scheme too early, and with no plan for protecting jobs in local lockdowns or a second wave, that is precisely what is happening."

Meanwhile Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said, "We're already supporting one person every two minutes on a redundancy issue."

"As the furlough scheme ends, that number could snowball. Failure to act risks long-term social and economic scarring."

Caroline Abrahams from Age UK warned that the number of over-50s being made redundant then completely falling out of employment is already rising sharply.

FIGURE IT OUT

61 percent of workers on furlough feel worried about their future job security, according to a recent survey for Perkbox

65 percent said that senior leadership should take cuts before axing jobs

47 percent felt safe about the prospect of returning to work



On other pages...

Health workers get set for day of action on pay >>Page 20



Strikes and protests for change in Belarus

Workers' action and demonstrations threaten the rule of the president, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

THE BELARUSIAN president Aleksander Lukashenko was fighting for the survival of his regime as Socialist Worker went to press.

Mass protests and, crucially, strikes have followed a rigged election in the east European country last week.

Around 300,000 people turned the capital Minsk into a sea of red and white, the colours of the opposition flag, on Sunday.

Tens of thousands more joined protests across the country, including in areas that have previously supported Lukashenko.

From the following morning, Minsk was a throng of protesters and striking workers.

Lukashenko prepared for a "meeting with the people" at the MZKT heavy goods vehicle company in Minsk.

He reportedly told workers, "We held elections—until you kill me, there will be no other election."

As soon he finished, workers chanted, "Go away!"

His authority melted away as he spoke in scenes reminiscent of the downfall of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989.

Media

Media workers at the state's STV and ONT news channels and BT radio station stopped work on Monday. A huge rally took place outside the OTN building on Communist Street.

Meanwhile, workers marched together from workplaces including the Kozlov electro engineering plant, the MZKT, the MAZ car plant, the MTZ tractor works.

Elsewhere there were reports of stoppages at the Belaruskali potash ore mines.

And workers at the Novopolotsk refinery, one of the regime's most important companies, rallied in the morning.

Strikes at a tractor plant show how the regime is losing credibility. Around 70 engineers and technicians from several departments walked out and rallied

BACK STORY

Ordinary people in Belarus are fighting the regime of president Aleksander Lukashenko

● Strikes and mass protests have grown since a rigged election took place last week

● Around 300,000 people joined a demonstration in the capital Minsk on Sunday

● Strikes have seen workers courageously take on their bosses and the state

● Western leaders hypocritically denounced police violence

last Tuesday. The regime's Deputy Director for Ideological Affairs at the company came out at lunchtime and tried to frighten them back into work.

This failed because, reported Nexta Live, "No one believes ideologues anymore."

Lukashenko has claimed victory over liberal challenger Sviatlana Tikhonovskaya, with 81 percent of the vote compared to her tally of just 11 percent.

Tikhonovskaya fled to Lithuania on Tuesday. She has released a new statement saying she could be an interim leader.

Various Western leaders are posing as supporters of the fight for freedom in Belarus, hypocritically denouncing police violence.

French president Emmanuel Macron urged the European Union to support the Belarus protesters. His police force tore into the Yellow Vest movement.

A genuine alternative to Lukashenko's authoritarianism is not more free market capitalism.

It lies in the streets and with workers fighting for democracy, social justice and a society where they are in charge.



More online

For more on the strikes go to bit.ly/BelarusStrikes

WORKERS WITH posters reading, 'Go away' march toward the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant where Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko addressed workers on Monday

Lukashenko's regime clashes with the West, but it is no friend of workers

ALEKSANDER LUKASHENKO came to the presidency in the chaos that followed the collapse of Stalinist Russia and the Eastern Block in the 1990s.

While these countries claimed to be "socialist" they were in fact state capitalist societies where working class people had no control.

The ruling class—the state bureaucracy—behaved in the same way as bosses do under free market capitalism.

Its aim was accumulating profit and to get ahead of international rivals, not meeting ordinary people's needs.

Revolutions overthrew the Eastern Bloc regimes in 1989 and Stalinist Russia broke apart into 15 republics. They transitioned from state capitalism to a free market capitalism.

Communist politicians became "democratic" politicians and the managers of state owned firms became private sector managers. Lukashenko, for instance, was the manager of a farming business.

Ordinary people, who had taken to the streets demanding freedom and social justice, paid the price of free market policies.

The way this played out was slightly different in Belarus to other republics.

In Belarus, the Stalinist bureaucracy was particularly conservative and had resisted any reforms.

But a series of powerful workers' protests in April 1991 shook the Communist Party to its foundation.

It included a wave of strikes across more than 80 state-owned companies in Minsk, some organised through independent trade unions.

Independence

A combination of splits at the top and protests pushed Belarus' parliament into declaring independence in August 1991.

But after independence, figures from the old ruling bureaucracy retained a large degree of power.

Unlike in Russia and other Eastern Bloc states, Belarus' rulers didn't pursue large scale free market reforms, fearing that it could destabilise their rule.

In 1994, Lukashenko was elected president in the country's first and last free presidential elections.

He has gambled on playing off rival imperialisms—the US, Russia

and the European Union (EU). By staying within the Russian camp, his regime got huge subsidies to prop up the economy.

More recently Lukashenko has courted investment from the West and China, both competitors of Russia, by backing some neoliberal policies.

One was a "decree against social parasites"—a tax on the unemployed—which sparked large protests and helped hollow out the regime's legitimacy.

The tilt towards the West has been strongly resisted by Russian president Vladimir Putin. He forced Belarus into negotiations over a state union with Russia—which Lukashenko rejected.

The West and Russia's rivalry over Belarus has nothing to do with democracy versus dictatorship.

It's no surprise that Western leaders are posing as supporters of the fight for freedom—with the aim of weakening a competitor.

Hope lies on the streets, not with imperialism East or West.

The mass actions in the last week have recalled the wave of protests that swept several parts of the world in the early months of this year before Covid-19 hit.

Let's keep up the NHS pay fight

NURSES AND healthcare workers have been undervalued, underpaid, understaffed and overworked for years (Socialist Worker, 5 August).

We are demoralised. The past ten years of Tory rule have decimated the NHS.

It became clear to me that it needed to be nurses who stepped up to defend their profession as nobody else was going to.

I felt an overwhelming need for direct action so I started organising in Sheffield as part of last Saturday's protests across Britain.

I am part of the "NHS Workers say NO" movement, which is grassroots-led and has over 70,000 members now.

We are not against pay rises for the rest of the public sector. But to be missed out deliberately was a big insult to us, especially off the back of the recognition for the work done during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is the first protest I have organised. It has been a little hectic, but more than worth it.

I've already connected with a number of interesting, passionate people from organisations such as the Sheffield Save our NHS campaign and the GMB union.

The level of support has been incredible. Now is the time and we need to get our voices heard

Holly

Nursing sister at a cancer hospital in Sheffield

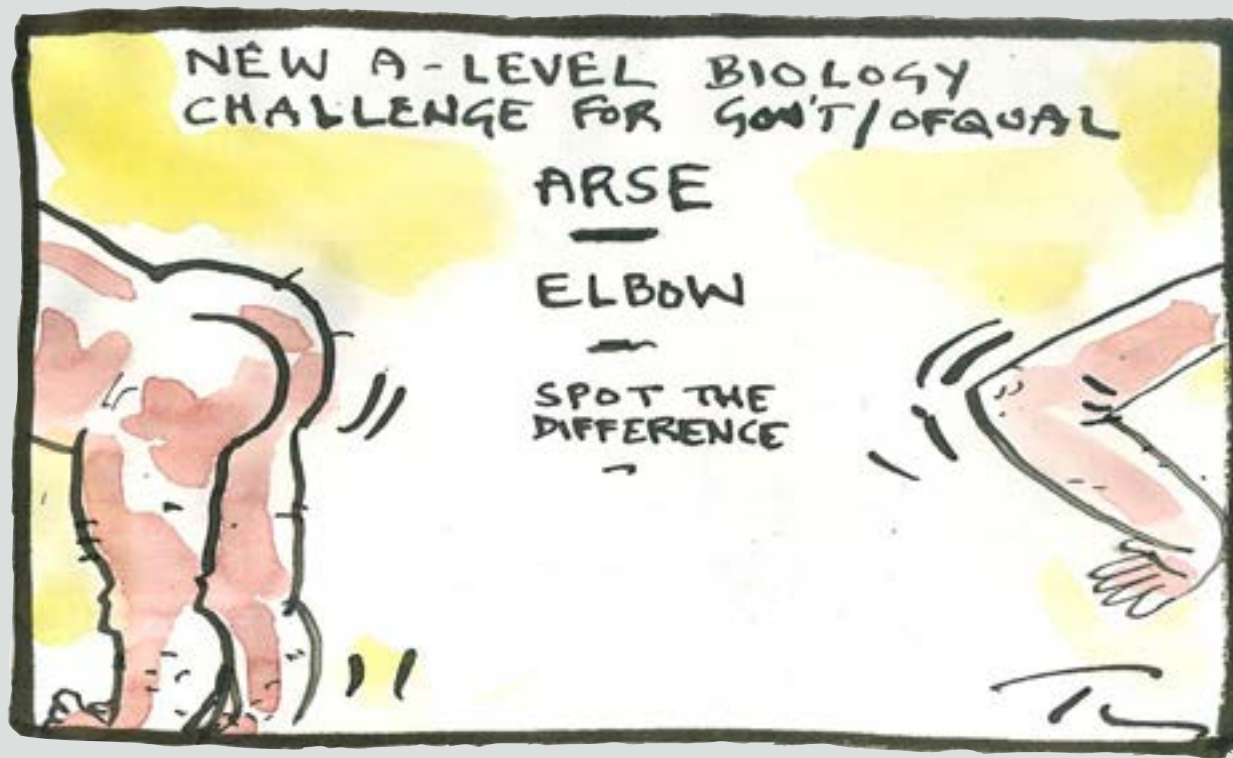


ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

The Met fails again over the Stephen Lawrence murder

THE METROPOLITAN Police are closing the investigation into the 1993 racist murder of Stephen Lawrence.

At least three suspects still remain at large.

From the outset police showed scant concern for black life.

Arriving at the scene of the knife attack they treated Stephen's companion Dwayne Brooks as a suspect.

They refused to apply first aid to Stephen as he bled. Police claimed there was a conspiracy of silence but in fact the suspects' names were quickly and repeatedly supplied.

And to add insult to injury the Met planted undercover cops to

spy on the Lawrence family as they campaigned for justice for their dead son. It took the intervention of Nelson Mandela to shame the authorities into launching a murder investigation. This itself was overshadowed by allegations of corrupt police links to the criminal underworld.

Met Commissioner Cressida Dick has never come to terms with Judge Macpherson's damning inquiry conclusion that the organisation was "institutionally racist".

Closure of the murder investigation is an attempt to erase that chapter of racist policing. Further, it's also a strategic move by Dick to press

ahead with continued over-policing of black people from stop and search, to racial profiling and the use of tasers.

The statistics are alarming. The equivalent of 25 percent of young black men in May in London were subject to stop and search during lockdown.

Some 80 percent of stop and search resulted in no further action.

Such levels of oppression cannot continue indefinitely without stoking a reaction. Twenty seven years after the murder of Stephen Lawrence the Met police are still rotten. They're still racist.

Harold Wilson

South east London

We can still unionise if working from home

HANNAH REYNOLDS raises important questions about how unions can organise people who work from home (Letters, 29 July).

I'm not convinced there will be a huge shift to working from home.

But it could definitely make it harder to organise collectively, with people feeling more atomised and lacking confidence to challenge their boss.

But it's not impossible. During the last few months of coronavirus and lockdown, many workers

have had to organise while at home. This included the campaign by the NEU education union and parents against wholesale reopening of schools back in June.

And over the last few years, we have seen strikes, protests and a growth of union membership among workers who aren't in a workplace. Think of the Uber delivery drivers or taxi drivers, who work alone on their job.

Nina Fenwick
North London

Bodger Boris should badger bad bosses

YOUR REPORT on XPO Logistics highlights a serious issue that the Tories are failing to tackle (Socialist Worker, 5 August).

In Sandwell, bad bosses are to blame for recent spikes in coronavirus. In West Bromwich, bosses at CBS packaging failed to make their workplace Covid-19 secure, resulting in a third of the workforce testing positive.

Other outbreaks originated from a meat processing plant and from workers being bussed to a farm in Evesham. With

the government only collecting data on home postcodes, a racist narrative has developed about "Asian areas".

It would be interesting to investigate whether rogue employers are also at fault in the north west of England.

Boris Johnson - a bodger

overcome their political instincts and tackle the bad bosses?

What is needed fast is mass inspections of workplaces, with the power to shut them down if they are not Covid-19 secure.

Or will bodger Boris and the Tories once again fail to do the right thing and mess up another aspect of the pandemic?

Tony Barnsley

Sandwell General Union union branch secretary (pc)

Just a thought...

Blame Tories, not migrants

WHAT ARE Boris Johnson and the Tories trying to cover up or keep off the front pages by suddenly putting the refugees in the forefront of the news?

These refugee boats have been crossing the channel for years and suddenly they have become the most important subject for the government to discuss.

Home secretary Priti Patel wants these boats pushed back to sea, which would result in great danger for the poor occupants.

It is all smoke and mirrors with this corrupt government. They are certainly trying to divert our attention from other issue.

Lorna Thomson
On Facebook

THE government is trying to distract from their recent apparent "success" over coronavirus. Cynical.

Rick Owen
On Facebook

Johnson lies over testing

EVERY CORONAVIRUS test that is done is noted as one person.

I know I have had two tests and colleagues I know have had three, which is classed as five persons.

If you are not a sheep you can see where this is going. The numbers don't match the true cases.

Lea Gaf
On Facebook

Blocked by the Guardian

I RECENTLY put a comment on the Guardian newspaper's website in response to an opinion piece on Keir Starmer. I said, "If you want a Labour leader who looks 'respectable' to the media, Starmer is the one."

"If you want a Labour leader who surrenders to those who falsely claim it's antisemitic to criticise of Israel, Starmer is the one."

After a few minutes my comment was removed for violating community standards.

I can only assume the Guardian is now banning any comments which say it's not antisemitic to criticise Israel or support the Palestinians.

Phil Webster
Lancashire

RAGE OVER RIGGED EXAMS FORCED A U-TURN

The government system for dishing out A-Level results hit poorest students while rewarding those who go to posh schools. **Sadie Robinson** looks at how teenagers' lives were left in tatters, and speaks to those who won a humiliating retreat by the government

C LASS INEQUALITY trashed the lives of hundreds of thousands of students. The downgrading of swathes of A-Level students' grades in England and Wales exposed how the system operates to keep working class people in check.

Young people are told that if they work hard and have "aspirations" then they will do well. It isn't true. Students aren't judged on their abilities. They're judged on where they come from.

"This is definitely about deprivation," student Ahmad told Socialist Worker. "I live in Aston in Birmingham. It's classed as a deprived area. My school said that I should get ABC grades. When I got my results, they were CDE."

"My mate is doing medicine and was predicted ABB or AAB. For one subject he received a D. It's tough to live in these areas."

Many students on course for C grades were downgraded to a U. One student, a native Spanish speaker, expected an A in Spanish. She got a U.

Sarah is a teacher and Head of Sixth Form at a school in west London. She told LBC radio that she had "never been so disgusted" as she was on A-Level results morning.

"We have a medical course where nine students were predicted a C," she said. "All nine have gone down to a U."

Sarah said that the government should accept grades predicted by

teachers. "The government needs to do a big fat U-turn now," she said.

The furore follows furious student protests in Scotland that forced a government retreat over downgrading.

John, a 16 year old student in Dundee, told Socialist Worker he was "disappointed and confused" when he first received his results. "All through my classes, I was straight As," he said. "And then I got a B in Maths."

"I spoke to other people and it was the same. One boy even got 89 percent and they brought him down to a B. I thought it was appalling."

Standardisation

Students' grades have been determined by a "standardisation" system. This decides results partly on the past performance of a school, sixth form or college, and hands higher grades to students in richer areas.

Parent Susan, whose son was downgraded, said his school is in "quite a deprived area of Glasgow".

"It is a postcode lottery," she told Socialist Worker. "I think it's unfair. I can remember from my school days that you're always told it's down to you. They say you need to put the work in, if you study hard you'll get the results."

"But it all seems to depend on the performance of the school, which is impacted by the area."

John said the bias is clear. "I've been to a few different high schools," he said. "One ranked very highly. When



'It reinforces inequality within the exam system'
Izzy
Bristol



I spoke to people there, most had got their straight As. In my school our entire Maths class was on for an A, but in the end only two people got an A."

Bristol student Izzy told Socialist Worker it is "horrible" for people to be downgraded based on their school. "It reinforces the inequality that's in the exam system anyway," she said.

London student Julia is worried about how the chaos will affect students like her, due to take A-Levels next year. She helped set up a Twitter group to fight for students' rights after joking with her friends about "having a revolution".

"Private schools have an unfair way of getting the top marks," Julia told Socialist Worker. "It's quite classist. If your school has a history of low grades, that determines your grade."

"But private schools are going to get higher grades, because people pay for the best education. More people from

private schools get into Oxford. And Eton can get you into any university you like, even if you don't achieve the grades."

Figures from exam regulator Ofqual confirmed that the system benefits richer students. Private schools saw a 4.7 percent rise in students getting As or higher between 2019 and 2020.

The figure for secondary



The system basically means the richest pupils are going to go the furthest



(above and left) **Protesting in London last week against the great exam stitch up**
PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

comprehensives was 2 percent, and for sixth forms and FE colleges just 0.3 percent.

Nearly half of grades, 48.6 percent, at private schools were A or higher, compared to 21.8 percent at secondary comprehensives and 20.8 percent at sixth forms and FE colleges.

Poorer children were more likely to have the grades proposed by their teachers overruled.

The scandal means many students can't go to the university they had hoped to—if they go at all.

"I wanted to go to Aston university," said Ahmad. "But they said they can only accept me if I get my grades. I phoned my school and they don't even know what's happening with the appeal process."

Prejudice

"I don't understand how Gavin Williamson and the rest of the ministers can let this happen. It's classic Tory behaviour and it's very prejudiced."

The Tories claim that their system is fair because students can appeal to use their mock exam results or can sit an exam in the autumn.

Julia added, "I feel the year 13s are really going to be screwed up for the future. A lot of people missed out on university grades, but it's not their fault."

"Even if people use their mock results or do resits, it's not entirely fair."

Mock exams, or prelims in Scotland,

are carried out differently in individual schools. Many students do better in final exams than in practice tests. And there are other problems with basing final results on them.

Susan said her son had "always been top of the class for Maths" but initially got a C as his final result.

Even a fresh assessment is likely not to give him the result he deserves.

"The Maths teacher recommended a B based on his prelim," she said. "But they were asked questions on that prelim on things that they hadn't yet been taught."

"Teachers said it was deliberately hard, and nobody did well in it. So even basing the B on that prelim is unfair."

John said downgrading has caused "lots of stress, especially for people who had conditional places for colleges".

Izzy added, "They say results don't define you. But we are judged so much on our grades."

Julia agreed. "You get into the mindset that, if you fail, you're not going to get far in life," she said.

Students feel their futures are being trashed—by downgraded results and by a lack of jobs due to the coronavirus crisis. Both reflect how the system fails working class people and protects those at the top.

"The system basically means the ones who are richer are going to go further," said Julia. "We don't have the same opportunities, even if we work hard our whole lives."



'This is definitely about deprivation'
Ahmad Birmingham



Tory education secretary Gavin Williamson—track record of failure

'Education is a right, but it's become a privilege'

THE CORONAVIRUS crisis has created "stark discrepancies" in students' experiences based on their background.

Researchers Professor Kalwant Bhopal and Dr Martin Myers surveyed 500 students who had exams cancelled this year, followed by 53 interviews.

"The differences we found were mainly around ethnicity," Kalwant told Socialist Worker. "The majority of white students, 82 percent, were satisfied with how their school had managed the crisis."

"But only 67 percent of black pupils and 42 percent of Asian pupils felt satisfied."

"Many Asian students felt they were high achievers, but that they were seen as not very good in schools."

Just 21 percent of students were happy that exams had been cancelled because they didn't trust their grades to be estimated accurately.

"They felt the process was unfair," said Kalwant.

"One student said he didn't do that well in his mocks but felt he would be able to do better."

Another had a sibling who was predicted ABB but in the exam got A*AA.

"Students also

fear they will be identified as the 'Covid-19 generation'. There's a notion that they have been hard done by. And that something has been taken away from them."

Researchers found a gap between students in private and state schools. "Some 81 percent of those in fee-paying independent schools were satisfied with their school, compared to 67 percent in state comprehensives," said Kalwant.

She said the scandal shone a light on "already existing inequalities".

Independent

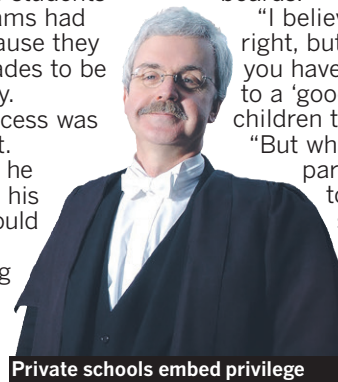
"One student from a fee-paying school told us, 'Independent schools can play the system to their advantage'," she said.

"They have their own rules—different exams, different exam boards."

"I believe that education is a right, but it's become a privilege. If you have the money, you can move to a 'good' area and send your children to a 'good' school."

"But what about the working parents in poverty who have to go to food banks and send their children to underfunded schools?"

"There are going to be a lot of students who will feel this system is unfair—and it is."



Private schools embed privilege

Protest forced Scottish retreat

STUDENTS IN Scotland are waiting to receive their updated grades, and many remain uncertain about their futures.

There is anger at the Scottish National Party (SNP).

Susan said the government's U-turn only came after students protested. "At first the Scottish government stuck to their guns," she said.

"Kids were left in limbo for about a week. That's a long time when your whole future

is in the balance."

"Backtracking a week later isn't good enough. It should never have happened in the first place."

John agreed. "I'm glad they came to their senses," he said.

"But they only went back on it after a lot of people were asking them to resign."

"I've always thought they were one of the better parties."

"For the SNP to do that has lost them quite a lot of trust and respect."



'I got straight As in Maths—but was awarded a B'
John Dundee

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

LEBANON—CATASTROPHE TO REVOLUTION

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 26 Aug,
7pm
281-634-5938

BRISTOL

Thu 27 Aug,
7.30pm
688-397-3148

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
818-391-0420

SWANSEA AND WEST WALES

Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
368-595-2712

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
ONLINE MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BLACK COUNTRY

The revolutionary ideas of Angela Davis
Wed 26 Aug, 8pm
352-891-2411

BOLTON AND WIGAN

Slavery, resistance and the Haitian Revolution
Thu 27 Aug, 6.30pm
872-5136-9540

BRADFORD

Workers, union leaders and the fightback
Thu 27 Aug, 7pm
885-9187-7552

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

From Muhammad Ali to Marcus Rashford—racism, sport and politics
Thu 27 Aug, 6.30pm
818-1857-1448

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

No return to normal—what kind of health service do we need?
Wed 19 Aug,
7.30pm
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE

Where does racism come from?
Thu 27 Aug,
7.30pm
681-800-4408

CARDIFF

Why refugees are welcome
Wed 26 Aug,
7.30pm
681-800-4408

CHESTERFIELD

Why we need system change not climate change
Thu 27 Aug, 6.30pm
829-532-8731

COVENTRY

How US Communists fought racism in the 1930s
Wed 26 Aug,
7.30pm
823-945-1917

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN AND PERTH

The Myanmar election, the Rohingya crisis and the road to democracy
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
396-573-1805

EDINBURGH

How can Scottish independence be won?
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
431-459-112

EXETER

Can the economy recover after the pandemic?
Wed 26 Aug, 7pm
865-2972-2883

GLASGOW

75 years after Hiroshima—why we must scrap Trident
Thu 27 Aug, 6.30pm
851-5254-7239

HARLOW

What do we mean by revolution and why do we need one?
Thu 27 Aug,
7.30pm
832-8746-7480

HUDDERSFIELD

No return to normal—what kind of health service do we need?
Thu 27 Aug, 6.30pm
6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT

China, India and the US—imperialism today
Thu 27 Aug, 8.15pm
434-623-8064

LEEDS

Is science neutral?
Thu 27 Aug, 7.15pm
935-5290-8076

LIVERPOOL

From #MeToo to Kamala Harris—how can we achieve women's liberation?
Wed 26 Aug, 7pm
493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY

Fake news and alternative facts—who controls the media?
Thu 27 Aug,
7.30pm
798-534-2585

LONDON: HARINGEY

After Corbyn—Starmer and Labour's shift to the right
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Climate catastrophe and Covid-19
Thu 27 Aug, 7pm
874-012-7970

LONDON: NEWHAM

Who controls the media?
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
992-204-9372

LONDON: SOUTH

Anti-colonial resistance in Africa
Wed 26 Aug, 7pm
497-196-1801

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Lenin at 150—why his ideas still matter
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
543-023-057

MANCHESTER

Who is to blame for obesity?
Wed 26 Aug, 7.15pm
323-178-7151

LONDON: NEWCASTLE

The bloody history of the British Empire
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
368-595-2712

NORWICH

Trump, China and imperialism
Wed 26 Aug, 7pm
906-652-5299

NOTTINGHAM AND DERBY

Why refugees are welcome
Wed 19 Aug, 7pm
354-874-4790

OXFORD

Trump, China and imperialism
Thu 27 Aug, 7.15pm
860-6762-9749

PORTSMOUTH

Trump, China and imperialism
Wed 19 Aug, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Workers, union leaders and the fightback
Thu 27 Aug, 7pm
529-174-9278

SOUTHAMPTON

How US Communists fought racism in the 1930s
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
381-513-5080

SWANSEA AND WEST WALES

Lenin at 150—why his ideas still matter
Thu 20 Aug, 7pm
248-448-3170

YORK AND SCARBOROUGH

Covid, capitalism and crisis
Wed 26 Aug, 7.30pm
827-489-7492

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



The Labour Party—A Marxist History
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein and Charlie Kimber, £14.99



A Rebel's Guide to Engels
by Camilla Royle
£4



Hegel and Revolution
by Terry Sullivan and Donny Gluckstein, £7



Transgender Resistance
by Laura Miles
£10

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Phone 020 7840 5600
Email enquiries@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 74955
London E16 9EJ

Murder that's set in a world of the odd and infuriating

Anthony Horowitz's latest crime thriller, *Moonflower Murders*, hides its clues in a second story. The device increases the intrigue, says **Sadie Robinson**

ANTHONY HOROWITZ doesn't just provide one complicated story in his new crime novel. He provides two complicated stories, and the solution to one is hidden within the other.

Moonflower Murders begins with Susan Ryeland, former editor of now-deceased Alan Conway's crime fiction books.

She's now in Crete running a hotel with her partner. But they've got money worries and she misses the literary world. Helpfully, a situation arises to make her richer and drag her back to books.

Lawrence and Pauline Treherne visit Susan with a problem. A man called Frank Parris was killed at their British hotel eight years ago, on the day of their daughter Cecily's wedding. Cecily has now vanished.

What has this got to do with Susan?

Before Cecily disappeared, she read one of Alan Conway's books, *Atticus Pund Takes the Case*. She then contacted her parents to tell them that the wrong man was in jail for Frank's murder.

It turns out that Alan had stayed at the hotel after the murder, and a lot of the people he met appeared in his book. Susan had edited it. Who better to find the clue that identifies Frank's real killer?

Strength

So follows Susan's visit to a fancy hotel in Britain full of sad, infuriating and downright odd characters. Actually two visits. As Susan begins to re-read the book she edited years previously, she finds another hotel, another murder, another set of similar characters.

Horowitz has used the mechanism of a mystery within a mystery before. It's a strength of the books that you get a sense of how nasty Alan is, even though he barely appears.

He looks down on his fans because he thinks crime fiction is boring.

So he fills the books with jokes and double meanings to "get one over" on his readers.

This literary device keeps the reader on their toes.

There are two sets of clues and red herrings to decipher. You are sent off to read his book halfway through the "actual" book, becoming part of the investigation.

At first it was annoying to move from one to the other. But I was quickly sucked into the new mystery, constantly wondering if this or that was a clue relevant to the first one.

The *Moonflower Murders* is a clever, engaging book that keeps you hooked until the end.

Anthony Horowitz's *Moonflower Murders* is out now and published by Penguin



AWAY—A young boy is pursued by a dark spirit while stranded on a mysterious island

Award-winning animation is beautiful

FILM

AWAY

Directed by Gints Zilbalodis
In cinemas from Friday 28 August

AWAY is a film from the prodigious Gints Zilbalodis, who wrote, designed, animated and scored the whole thing himself.

Half of the point of this is just to revel for an hour and ten minutes in the fantastic landscapes Zilbalodis has

dreamed up. The lush detail in these contrasts with the paired-down, impressionistic, cartoonish drawing in the foreground to create a ghostly effect.

It all feels like an experimental video game. The lead character, a nameless, voiceless boy, has to journey across an island to find a way home.

It's a stripped down version of the "hero's journey"—where the central figure embarks on an

adventure, overcomes a crisis, and ends a changed person. It's also a fairly obvious metaphor for life.

Everything the boy encounters, and every part of the landscape, seemingly exists to coax him along a path he has to go down.

And all the while he's followed by a colossal shadow he's mostly running from, but also has to confront.

Away won the Zilbalodis Contrechamp prize at last year's Annecy Festival.

TELEVISION

MANGROVE

Directed by Steve McQueen
Due to air on BBC in early autumn

RARELY DOES a trailer from a BBC drama create such a buzz of excitement as last week's taster for the film *Mangrove*.

The brilliant director Steve McQueen is best known for his films *Hunger*, *12 Years a Slave* and his recent hit, *Widows*.

He has now finished work on a new five-part series called *Small Axe*.

Mangrove is the second part of the anthology that aims to document the lives of black people in Britain.

The film takes up the story of protesters in 1970s Notting Hill who marched on local police stations in anger against police harassment. Nine march



Mangrove—coming soon

leaders were arrested and charged with incitement to riot. The group later became known as the Mangrove Nine.

McQueen said he was sharing the promo to "commemorate the bravery of these community activists and the nine who went on to be acquitted of incitement to riot with the judge citing 'evidence of racial hatred'".

SUPERFLY

Directed by Director X
Out this week on Netflix

WHEN SOUL legend Curtis Mayfield agreed to write the score to the original version of this film, he thought it was about the way poverty and drugs were impacting on black Americans.

But when he saw the unedited footage, he was horrified to find it was a glorification of pimps and dealers. He then set about writing a soundtrack that completely undermined the premise of the film.

What on earth would he think of this remake, which is available on Netflix from this week?

The glammed-up world of the "players" is emphasised by showy sequences and sex scenes—just as in the original.

But this time there's nothing in the soundtrack to even the score.



ON 25 March 1931, a group of young black teenagers were hitching on a freight train travelling through Paint Rock, Alabama.

The Great Depression forced them, and thousands like them, to leave their homes to find work.

On their journey they were forced to fight off a racist attack by a group of white men—who then fled the train and complained to the local sheriff.

The teenagers were dragged off the train and charged with a minor offence.

But then two white women were discovered on the train. To avoid charges of prostitution they claimed the black teenagers had raped them.

The young men's trial took place in the town of Scottsboro, Alabama. There was no real evidence against them and they did not receive proper legal representation.

But within just two weeks death sentences had been passed on Eugene Williams (13), Ozie Powell (16), Willie Roberson (16), Olen Montgomery (17), Haywood Patterson (18), Clarence Norris (19), Charlie Weems (19) and Andy Wright (19).

The trial of Andy's thirteen year old brother, Roy, ended with a hung jury because one juror supported life imprisonment over the electric chair.

And so began the case of the Scottsboro Nine, or the “Scottsboro Boys” as they became widely known.

Lynched

Their trial came as thousands of black men in the Southern states of the US were being arrested without evidence, found guilty by all-white juries and rapidly executed.

As mobs gathered outside their jail, many thought the teenagers would not live long enough even to be “legally lynched”. The Scottsboro Nine survived for one reason—the intervention of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA).

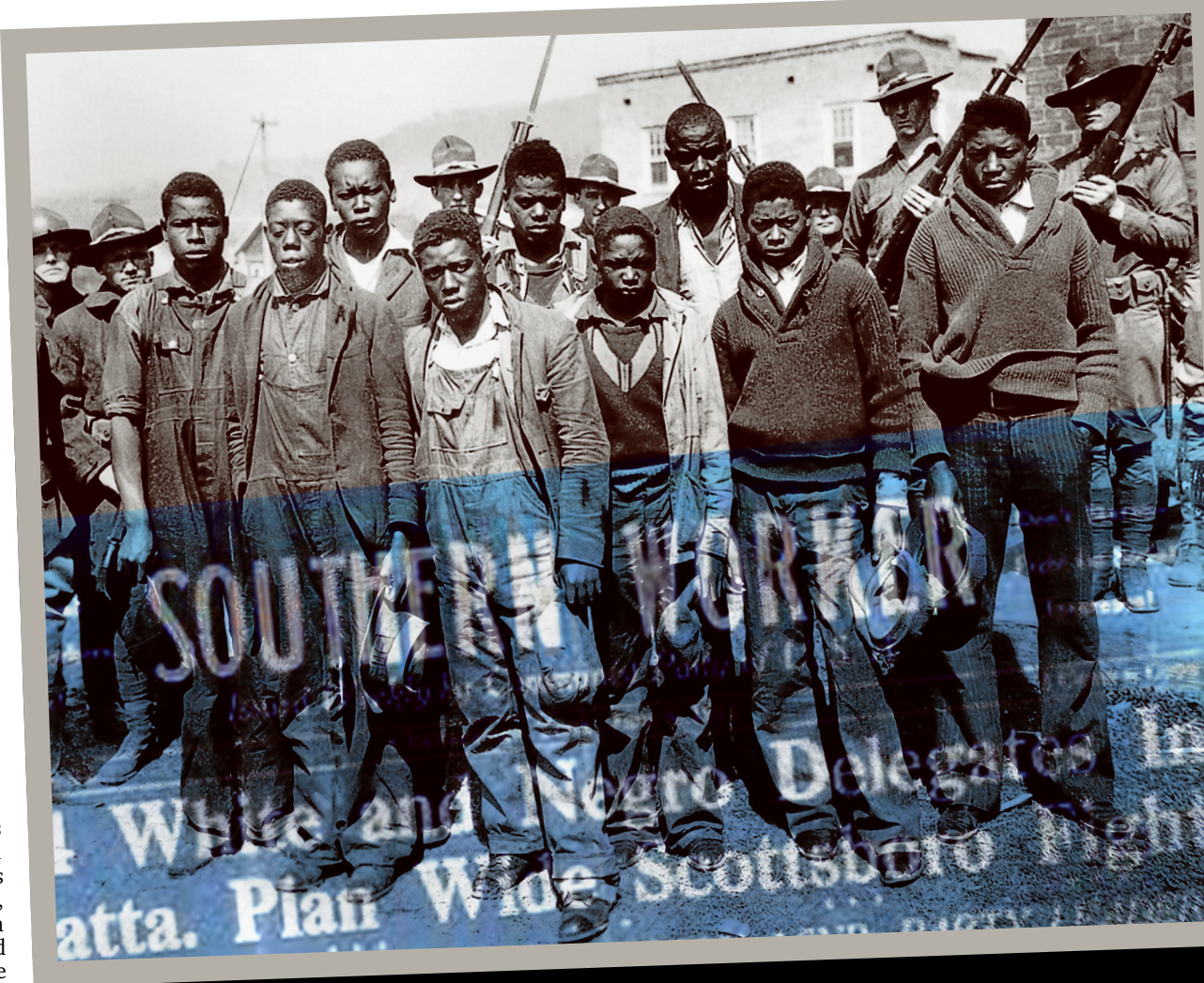
On hearing of the case the Communist legal organisation, International Labor Defense (ILD), sprang into action.

Communist activist Mary Dalton offered support to the young men's families. No other organisation, black or white, came to their aid.

The middle class National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) worried that associating with lower class young men accused of rape would only damage their reputation.

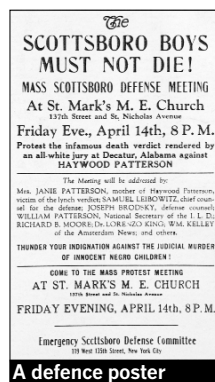
Communists argued that the men would never get justice from the South's racist legal system and could only be saved by mass campaigning across the US and the world.

It was a lesson they'd learnt through bitter experience.



SCOTTSBORO A CASE THAT PUT RACISM ON TRIAL

When nine black teenagers were falsely accused of raping two white women in the US Deep South in 1931, most expected they'd suffer the death sentence. But, says Judy Cox, they'd reckoned without the Communist Party



In 1929 the CPUSA had sent two organisers, Tom Johnson and Harry Jackson, to Birmingham, Alabama. Their job was to set up party operations in the city.

Both men were abducted, stripped, beaten and driven out of the city.

Southern Jim Crow laws enshrined strict racial segregation, while the Ku Klux Klan terrorised black people who dared to step out of line—and those Communists who dared to organise among



Communists had a reputation for confronting racist terror

them. Just 12 years earlier, poor black sharecroppers organised a farmers' union in Elaine, Arkansas.

White vigilantes unleashed a wave of terror in the town and murdered over 800 black men, women and children.

The Communists had a reputation for confronting racist terror. The party was the driving force behind the National Anti-Lynching Committee, which publicised the racist murders of black men. One was

84 year old Dennis Crow, who was dragged from his bed and lynched after a fallacious rape allegation. Another was Tom Robertson, who was targeted after a row with a neighbour.

He saw four members of his family lynched before he was executed.

The CPUSA combined the struggle against poverty with the fight against racism. As a result, the party recruited many talented young black activists.

The campaign to free the Scottsboro Nine spread rapidly to the Northern states. On 12 April 13,000 people marched for justice in Cleveland, Ohio, and the following day 20,000 protested in New York.

The ILD and its international wing, Red Aid, organised protests across the world, from Sydney to Montreal, from Cape Horn to Shanghai and Buenos Aires.

In London in February 1932, 2,000 marched for the Scottsboro Nine from the Thames to Hyde Park. In April, supporters marched from Poplar and Bermondsey to the US embassy.

THE Scottsboro Nine campaign was rooted in the international working class movement. It was sustained by London dockers, German engineers, Dutch railworkers and Russian miners. And it was led by black and white socialists.

Black women were particularly prominent. Within weeks of the verdict, the mothers of the defendants—Janie Patterson, Viola Montgomery, Mamie Williams Wilcox and her one year old baby, Ida Norris and Ada Wright—were travelling across the US speaking to rallies.

Janie and Ada led protests in Harlem, the heart of the black community in New York.

Ada, a domestic worker who had never left Tennessee before, went on an arduous speaking tour of 16 European countries.

In England, she spoke to audiences of hundreds in Greenwich and Willesden in London, and she was greeted by crowds in Bristol, and Manchester.

In Scotland, she spoke in Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Lockerbie, Springburn and Glasgow.

Communist leader and former MP Shapurji Saklatvala addressed Ada's farewell at east London's Shoreditch church.

“The British workers have shown by their reception to Mrs Wright that they have broken down the barriers dividing them from the Negro races,” he said.

One thousand supporters marched with her to Liverpool Street station.

The authorities were unrelentingly hostile to Ada. She was imprisoned in Czechoslovakia and expelled from several countries. But working class people turned out in their thousands to hear her.

Now that the campaign had won popularity, the NAACP fought to regain the initiative. They tried on several occasions to win the right to provide legal defence.

They argued that instead of marches and protests, which could antagonise Southern opinion, the Nine's best chance was to seek a respectable defence.

Convictions

The party and the NAACP were locked in battle for leadership for much of the rest of the campaign—but the families never wavered from their support for the Communist ILD.

In March 1932, the Alabama State Supreme Court upheld the original convictions.

Only 13 year old Eugene Williams was granted a new trial because of his age. But in May the United States Supreme Court decided to hear the case, a defeat for the Alabama court.

Ada believed that her international campaign had won this concession. And she fiercely defended the Communists' tactics against the NAACP, who she publicly denounced on several platforms.

Black women were also central to the Scottsboro campaign in Harlem. Louise Thompson Patterson, a figure in Harlem's Black Renaissance, became a leading spokesperson and organised a march through Washington DC in May 1933.

It attracted 5,000 and was the first civil rights march in the capital.

Audley Moore was a Louisiana-born, working class black woman. The granddaughter of a slave, members of her family had been lynched.

She was among 4,000 Harlem residents who joined the ILD in 1933. She threw herself into the Scottsboro campaign and gained a reputation as a “stepladder” speaker, addressing crowds on street corners.

In April 1933 Ruby Bates, one of the women who accused the Scottsboro Nine, admitted that the young men had never touched her and became a witness for the defence.

This admission did not lift the death sentences that hung over the men.

In 1934 ILD lawyers launched a legal challenge because black people were wrongly excluded from the Scottsboro jury.

The Alabama Supreme Court denied the motion for a retrial. In 1937 the Nine had their death sentences commuted to long terms of prison.



Haywood Patterson (top), during his second trial in April 1933 with New York attorney Samuel Leibowitz at his left. Marching in Washington for the Scottsboro defendants in 1933 (above). International Labor Defence badge (below)

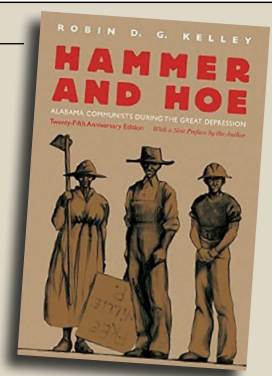


READ MORE

● **Hammer and Hoe—Alabama Communists During the Great Depression** by Robin DG Kelley
Kindle edition £13.79

● **Communists in Harlem during the Depression** by Mark Naison
Used copies from £25.99

● **Defying Dixie—the radical roots of civil rights** by Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore
Used copies from £19.33



**FOCUS ON
THE ECONOMY**

Is it inevitable there will be a rise in unemployment?

Job losses aren't just about coronavirus. Sarah Bates says we need to fight for jobs and against a system that destroys them

MILLIONS OF people across Britain are fearing for their jobs, and at least 730,000 jobs have already gone since March.

We're told this is just the unavoidable fallout from the pandemic. But mass unemployment isn't inevitable.

It flows from the logic of the capitalist system driven by competition, accumulation and profit.

Despite companies warning of the need to tighten their belts, there's plenty of money moving around the British economy.

There is currently an unprecedented amount of cash being channelled from the state to bosses.

And mid-sized companies can apply directly to the Treasury for a handout of up to £200 million through its own scheme.

This transfers cash into private firms who claim to be struggling because of the pandemic.

Production

So far, £18.8 billion has been given to just 55 businesses through the Bank of England scheme.

The bank asked firms to “show restraint” on dividend payments and management pay.

But there's nothing to stop them letting bosses and shareholders continue to stuff their pockets with cash.

We should fight to direct that money towards creating useful and sustainable jobs.

Despite the state supporting bosses, they are still choosing to sack people.

And unemployment is going to increase dramatically when the furlough scheme fully winds down in October.

It's important to fight for short-term measures, such as an extension of the furlough scheme, that would allow people to cling onto their livelihoods.

It is possible to resist when jobs are being cut and every recession has seen a fightback from workers.

For instance, the deepest slump in the 1930s saw mass strikes, riots, mutinies and demonstrations explode.

And Margaret Thatcher's 1980s Britain saw waves of strikes and riots against racism.

But as disastrous as the Tories' coronavirus strategy has been, unemployment can't be pinned just on this—it's built into the system.

Unemployment is part of a much wider problem of how production and how the world of work is organised under capitalism.

It's the profit system that's to blame.

Bosses sack workers because they don't want to pay for their wages unless they can maximise profits out of their labour—no matter how important that work is.

They attempt to justify unemployment by explaining that profits are falling.

Class society produces relentless competition between capitalists, which means that very often too much is produced.

That's why there are dozens of brands of

toothpaste and scores of different types of washing up liquid—because each individual boss wants you to buy their product.

And workers will sometimes spend their whole lives in industries that are useless for society as a whole.

That's why billions of pounds and an entire industry is devoted to building and maintaining nuclear weapons—an armoury that if it were used, would destroy the planet several times over.

It's the profit system that's to blame.

Spend

It is vital that there's resistance to the coming jobs slaughter. During recent years, unions have given a feeble response.

Huge jobs losses and closures in the steel and car industries, for instance, were met by union press releases and the odd march or lobby of MPs.

Workers can strike and occupy their workplaces to demand they remain open and for the bosses to pay the price of the crisis. And we can win.

In France, for instance, unions have recently blocked several plant closures through militant action.

There are huge tasks, such as decarbonising the economy to face the threat of climate change that mean no one need face unemployment.

But that requires a democratically planned economy geared towards meeting social need, not maximising profit.

To stop people being thrown onto the scrap heap, we need to consign capitalism to the dustbin.



It is possible to resist when jobs are being cut

WILLIAM CUFFAY

A fighter to the end against the rich 'vermin'

by CHARLIE KIMBER

WILLIAM CUFFAY was one of the most prominent leaders of the working class movement in 19th century Britain.

He was central to one of the first workers' mass movements in history. As an admiring account from 1850 said, he was "loved by his own order, who knew him and appreciated his virtues, ridiculed and denounced by a press that knew him not, and had no sympathy with his class, and banished by a government that feared him".

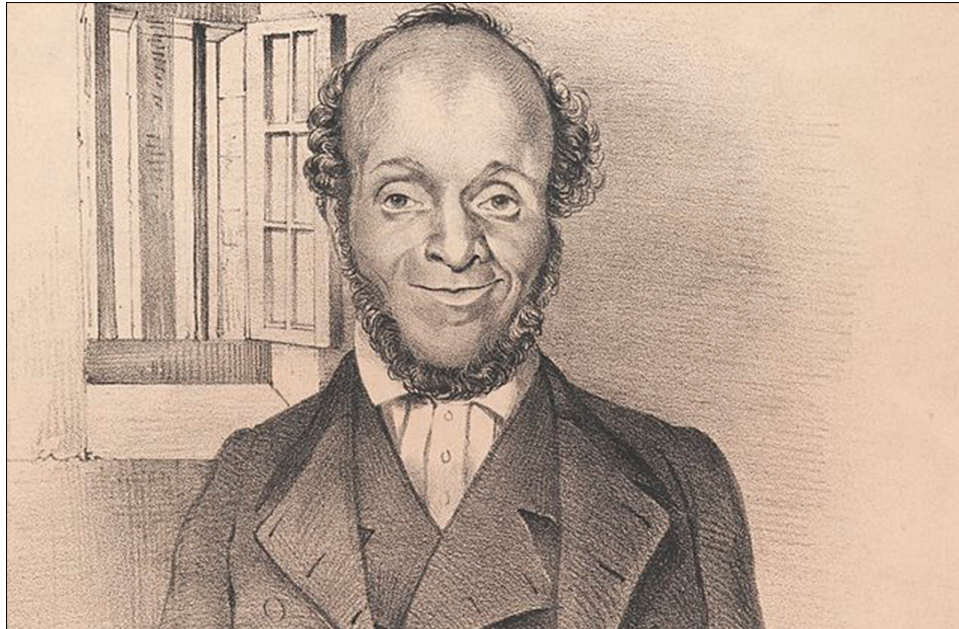
Cuffay was born on a merchant ship in 1788, the son of a naval cook and former slave from the British colony of St Kitts. His family later settled in Chatham, Kent.

Tailor

Cuffay moved to London and trained as a tailor. In 1834 he joined a strike demanding a cut in working hours and a pay rise.

The strike failed, and Cuffay was sacked and blacklisted.

Enraged at his treatment,



A PORTRAIT of London Chartist leader William Cuffay

he became involved in the struggle for democratic rights and the Chartist movement.

The Chartists fought for the vote and other democratic rights. From the beginning Cuffay, a disabled black man, became one of their most important activists. A flavour

of his politics comes from an article in the Northern Star, the Chartists' newspaper. It records Cuffay making a speech in 1842.

The paper records that he told the crowd that "as a trade unionist he had exerted himself to the utmost in

behalf of his order: but was now convinced that the cause of their distress was higher than the tyranny of their employers—that they must put the axe to the root of the tree".

He went on to denounce employers who told workers

that their real problem was overpopulation and that they must emigrate if they wanted decent wages. "If any must emigrate let it be the aristocracy," said Cuffay.

Cheering

The paper said that to great cheering he finished his speech with the words from a poem, "If bugs molest me, as in bed I lie, I'll not quit my bed for them, not I, But rout the vermin—every bug destroy, New make my bed, and all its sweets enjoy."

He dedicated his life to squashing the bugs at the top of society.

In 1839 he helped to form the Metropolitan Tailors' Charter Association and soon moved into a high-profile role.

He was elected to the central executive of the National Charter Association in 1842, and later that year voted president of the London Chartists.

Cuffay's significance is illustrated by a contemporary report in The Times newspaper. It sneeringly referred to the London Chartists as "the black man and his party".

Cuffay helped to organise the large Chartist rally on Kennington Common in 1848. But he was dismayed by the hesitancy and cowardice of other leaders who rejected the idea that the rally should be a springboard for direct action.

He turned to the idea of clandestine organisation to set off an uprising. But the "secret" group was infested with state spies.

Cuffay and others were arrested, tried, found guilty of "levying war on the queen" and sentenced to transportation to Tasmania for life.

There, Cuffay campaigned against repressive colonial laws and was active right up until his death in 1870.

He was never forgotten in Britain. As one Chartist wrote after his trial, "Whatever may be his after fate, whilst integrity in the midst of poverty, whilst honour in the midst of temptation are admired and venerated, so long will the name of William Cuffay, a scion of Africa's oppressed race, be preserved from oblivion."

This is part of a series about radical black lives Go to bit.ly/SWBlackLives

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Joe Biden's coronation will not bring real change

As Democrats pick corporate favourite Joe Biden as their presidential candidate to face Donald Trump, **Sophie Squire** says hope lies outside the party machine

WHEN JOE Biden is crowned the Democratic presidential candidate at the party's convention this week, big business and the generals will be cheering the loudest.

Biden has a proven track record of backing corporations, slashing social security and supporting US wars since he was first elected senator for Delaware in 1973.

With Donald Trump's disastrous handling of coronavirus, Biden has been able to present himself as a competent and safe pair of hands.

And he has a certain sheen after being Barack Obama's vice president, compared to fellow establishment Democrats who millions despise.

But Biden's policies fly in the face of what the resistance to Trump is demanding.

Rhetoric

He is well known for his "tough on crime" rhetoric and in 1994 he authored and helped pass the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.

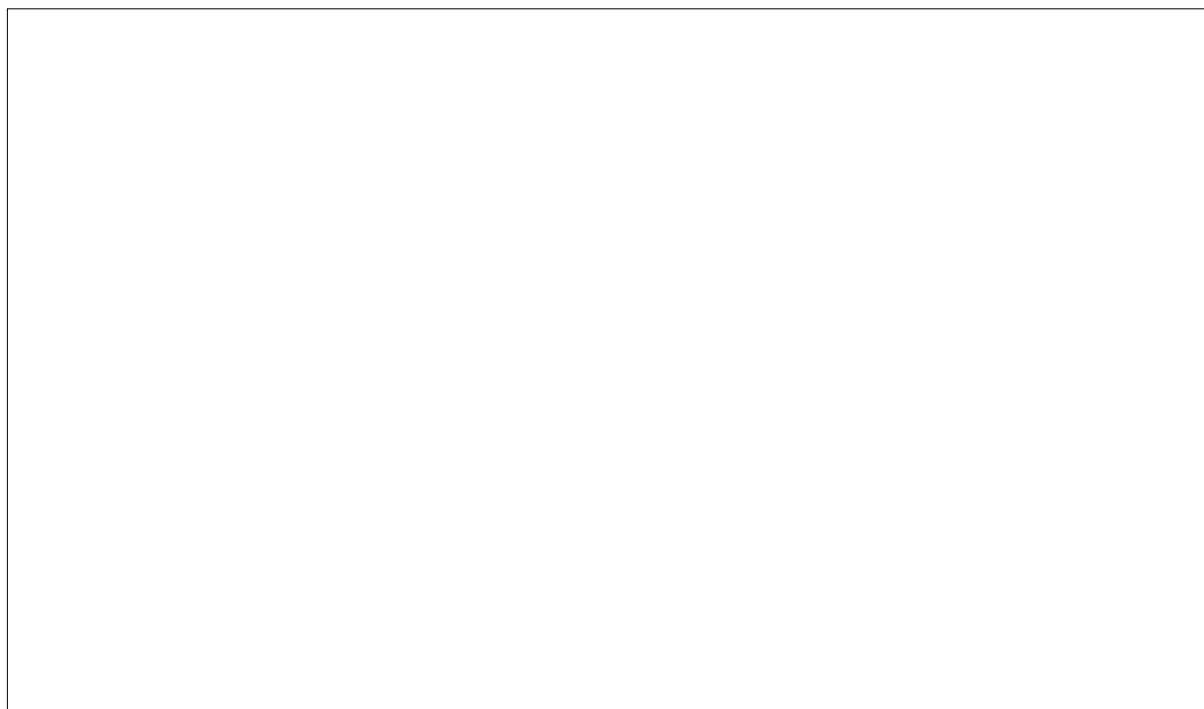
The law meant that 100,000 more cops were put on the streets and more funding was funnelled into prisons.

It also encouraged prosecutors to try children as adults, as states would be rewarded for giving out tougher sentences.

And while Biden condemned Trump's drive to build a border wall between the US and Mexico, he supports tougher border controls.

He has been a vocal opponent of Medicare For All, which would take power out of the hands of the private health insurance industry.

Then there are all the allegations of sexual assault made by multiple



DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL candidate Joe Biden—in the neoliberal fast lane

women. When questioned about them, Biden said, "I'm not sorry for anything I have ever done."

Despite this, a vote for Biden is seen as a lesser of two evils against Trump.

Trump needs to go. But the Democratic party has a long history of being a shock absorber for radical change, and polices the parameters of what it's seen as possible to fight for.

Time and again, the left and mass movements have got behind the Democrats to stop the Republicans.

The result isn't to shift the Democrats to the left. Rather,

knowing that left wingers, organised labour and social movements will back them, the Democrats are free to charge to the right.

Foot

And the left gets turned into the foot soldiers of the Democratic electoral machine, instead of building movements that have the power to bring about genuine change.

The Black Lives Matter movement has won important reforms.

In Los Angeles, for instance, Mayor Eric Garcetti has said he would cut up to \$150 million from the Police

Department's budget. And in Seattle, the movement has won cuts to the police budget and prisons reform. But the pull on the movement is to unequivocally get behind the Democrats to stop Trump.

Once the Democrats are in office, the argument becomes don't rock the boat.

It's a damning indictment that the Obama administration deported more migrants than George Bush, who faced mass opposition unlike his successor.

The route to real change in the US doesn't run through Biden.

'Not me, them' says Sanders

KAMALA Harris hasn't gone down well with the left. The Progressive Democrats of America pressure group, which had endorsed Bernie Sanders, said that Harris "failed for years to hold police accountable for gross misconduct in California".

But Sanders congratulated Harris, claiming she "understands what it takes to stand up for working people".

Bankrolled by billionaires

WHEN Kamala Harris stood to be the presidential candidate, her campaign raked in donations from more than 20 billionaires in the first two months.

Biden hopes more corporate cash will roll his way after he picked Harris. He has already received massive donations from over 90 billionaires.

Kamala Harris—top cops' faces in high places

MANY PEOPLE are celebrating that Democratic senator Kamala Harris could become the first black woman to be vice president.

Biden's pick was a conscious nod to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

The Democrats oppose its militancy and radical demands, such as defunding the police, but want to corral the movement behind the party machine.

One of the BLM



Former chief prosecutor Kamala Harris

movement's co-founders, Alicia Garza, went as far as to say that Harris is "very talented and qualified" for the job.

Unconvinced

But others in the movement remain unconvinced, because they are demanding systematic change, not more "black faces in high places".

Harris has an appalling record of backing the tougher policing and a prison system that disproportionately locks up black people. During

her time as attorney general of California and district attorney of San Francisco, she advocated harsher sentences—including the death penalty.

As California attorney general, Harris sought to block gender reassignment surgery for incarcerated transgender people.

And as a senator, she twice voted against federal funding for abortion and supported Trump's drive to escalate the war with Syria.

This worked so well last time

STANDING the warmonger Hillary Clinton didn't help the Democrats in the last presidential election.

She offered no change and opened the door to Trump. Her backing Biden could give Trump some hope.

Poorest are now showing symptoms of malnutrition

The government's handling of coronavirus means that people are going hungry, says **Charlie Kimber**

POOR PEOPLE are in a food crisis—with many showing “early signs” of malnutrition.

They don't have enough to eat as bosses axe their jobs and benefits are hard to access and grossly inadequate.

A devastating new study shows up to one in ten people have been forced to use food banks, and vast numbers have been skipping meals and going hungry.

The figures come from the government's food safety watchdog, the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

It said families struggling with a big fall in income had moved to highly restrictive “basic sustenance” diets that largely cut out healthy foods. The report said people “quickly cut calorie intake and reduced the quality of the food eaten. Many children went without.” For the better off, Covid-19 has provided nutritional benefits. The FSA survey showed more people cooking at home from scratch using healthy ingredients rather than having takeaways.

Cheap

These benefits were denied to people in food insecurity, whose diet narrowed sharply and was biased towards cheap carbohydrates such as rice and pasta.

One man, the FSA study found, “ate mostly tinned peas on toast; another woman mostly bread.” Many showed “early signs” of malnutrition. Others put on weight.

Such grim experiences underline that the Tories' call for people to be healthy and lose weight are a hollow mockery.

Increasing food prices meant some doubled their food spend, even though they ate less.

Many struggled to afford food used to manage their health—such as gluten-free.

Birthday meals and Sunday lunches were cancelled. “There was little sense of social sharing when serving toast for the second ‘meal’ of the day,” the study found.

The FSA is concerned that many people in food insecurity reported regularly eating food beyond its use-by date. Over a quarter said

BACK STORY

A Food Standards Agency report showed many more people forced to use food banks.

- Some 25 percent reported it was because they had lost their job and 20 percent said it was because they were on furlough
- Some 27 percent reported a delay or problems with benefits and 20 percent stated it was simply due to not having enough money
- The food crisis will worsen as unemployment continues to rise

they drank milk that was past its use-by date.

“Stretching out” food in this way put them at risk of food poisoning.

Emily Miles, chief executive at the Food Standards Agency, said, “Our research shows that our food habits changed rapidly in lockdown and that food insecurity has become an issue for many people.”

This is not some temporary phenomenon. The FSA said its independent Covid-19 expert advisory panel had identified food insecurity as a “prioritise and act” issue.

This echoes the findings of the recently published National Food Strategy, which concluded that because of the post-lockdown recession many more families will struggle to feed themselves adequately.

A Hackney Foodbank volunteer told Socialist Worker, “We were included in the keyworker issue of Vogue for July.

“I was proud to see foodbanks recognised, but we really shouldn't have to exist. We don't want the public to see us as part of the mainstream.

“There is plenty more work to be done to change society and address the lack of support for those who don't have enough to afford the essentials.”

For the full report go to bit.ly/FSAsstats



On other pages...

Is unemployment inevitable? >>> Page 15



MAKING SANDWICHES on the Greencore production line

PICTURE: GRENCORE

Production continues as 300 workers test positive for C-19 at sandwich plant

by SARAH BATES

OVERPRICED, pre-packaged sandwiches shouldn't be a matter of life and death, but for Greencore factory workers that could be the case.

Some 299 workers have tested positive for Covid-19 at the food factory in Northampton, which employs 2,100 people. The plant makes sandwiches for suppliers including Marks and Spencer.

Workers who tested positive are self-isolating, but the outbreak could be even bigger than initially thought—between 300 and 400 results are yet to come back.

Nicolae Macari, Bfawu union branch secretary at the factory, was one of those who tested positive.

“When suddenly three or four people are pulled out of a line because they have tested positive, people are terrified,” he said.

“Making sandwiches seems to be much more important than everything else.”

Nicolae's mother and father also work at the site and also tested positive. His wife also tested positive for Covid-19. By 3 August

13 workers at the plant had tested positive and the local Public Health officials told other Greencore employees to get tested.

Northampton is experiencing a rise of cases and has the 12th highest rate of coronavirus infections in England.

Its population is suffering from 38 positive cases for every 100,000 people.

In July, Northampton was put on a watchlist as an area that might need to enter a local lockdown.

Behave

Lucy Wightman, Director of Public Health at Northamptonshire County Council, claimed that the outbreak was “about how people behave outside of Greencore, not at work”.

She also said that rising infection rates meant a local lockdown was on the cards.

Wightman said the firm had “highly effective measures in place and they continue to work extremely hard to exceed the requirements needed to be Covid-19 secure within the workplace”.

It's absurd to suggest that the

Greencore workplace isn't the centre of this outbreak.

But instead of shutting down the factory, Greencore said it was “continuing as usual” and conducted tests over a period of three days.

Whatever people's behaviour outside the workplace is, the rate of infection in Greencore is far higher than in the rest of the community.

Therefore, Covid-19 is being transmitted at the factory, and workers should demand that the workplace is closed without any loss of pay.

And their Bfawu union should support them in taking the action necessary to make this happen.

The outbreak at Greencore shows that bosses would rather have workers in unsafe workplaces than shut down business even for just one day.

It follows a similar case at an Asda-owned meat processing site in West Yorkshire, where 165 employees contracted the virus in June.

Several other plants have also been hit.

The bosses' relentless drive for profit endangers us all.

UNISON

Left candidate says, 'Let's shake Unison'

by SARAH BATES

THE PROCESS to choose the next Unison union general secretary has begun—and left candidate Paul Holmes says his campaign is “going better than expected”.

Candidates have to receive at least 25 nominations from union branches to make it on to the ballot paper—and Paul has received four in the first few days since nominations opened.

And endorsements have been flooding in.

Labour MP John McDonnell and Glen Williams, chair of the union's local government service group executive, have both supported Paul.

Opportunity

Paul—a union activist for over 40 years—told Socialist Worker that the election is an important opportunity to shake things up inside the union.

“This is the sixth general secretary election there's been in Unison and all five previous ones have been won by employees of the union.

“It's time a lay member really has a chance to do it—someone who has been at the coal face.”

Also standing are three people employed by the union on a full-time basis—Christina McAnea, Margaret Greer and Roger McKenzie.

Paul is vowing to take a worker's wage of £32,000



PAUL HOLMES, a rank and file candidate

a year rather than the £138,000 a year that comes with the job.

He will fight for a £15 an hour minimum wage for all workers, begin a national anti-austerity campaign and push to implement a green agenda for Unison.

Paul's manifesto also includes pledges to support Black Lives Matter, to sell Unison's London headquarters and to improve collective bargaining arrangements across the union. He said the

fast-moving political climate means the union needs a leadership that will respond swiftly to the coronavirus crisis.

“Things are changing a lot faster at the moment than they have done for a long time,” he said. “Four weeks ago, any conversation about the NHS would have been about health provision or who's dying.

“But suddenly, the pay rise demand became a dynamite situation from nowhere.”

As a socialist and Labour member, Paul said the election—and the Tory crisis—is a good opportunity to transform Unison into a fighting union.

“The government is stumbling from one crisis to the next,” he said. “All our members want to know is ‘What's the plan?’ And I don't think that question is answered by the government.

“In Unison we need to act as big as we are. I don't always get the impression we're Britain's biggest trade union with 1.3 million members.”

“We need to have a far higher public profile and lead the fight rather than waiting to see where the fight is. We need to act like a national union.”

Enthusiasm

Paul said there is “a job for everyone” who wants to help support his bid and that harnessing members' enthusiasm for a fighting union is critical to a successful campaign.

Everyone who wants to see trade union leaders take on the Tories' deadly Covid-19 blunders and brutal austerity should throw their support behind Paul.

●It is critical that Paul receives nominations from Unison branches—to invite him to a hustings or discuss the nominations process contact paul4gensec@gmail.com

●Further information about Paul's campaign can be found at [Paul4GenSec](https://www.paul4gensec.com) on Twitter and Facebook.

GALLERIES



Picketing at Tate Modern

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Tate galleries strikers battle to stop 313 redundancies

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

ANGRY PCS union members at the Tate galleries in London launched a strike on Tuesday against over 300 job cuts.

The redundancies target those who work for Tate Commerce in shops, restaurants and publishing across all of the Tate galleries.

The cuts come despite the Tate applying to receive a £7 million government bailout.

Jonathan, a senior PCS rep who works in the shop at Tate Modern, told Socialist Worker that retail workers “are the lowest paid and now it feels like we are the most disposable”.

Julia, who has worked in retail at Tate Modern for six years, said, “The shop brings in millions of profit, yet the workers there aren't valued.”

She added that office workers at the gallery had been reassigned to work in the shops to undermine the strike.

Many of the workers were furious that they could lose their jobs during a pandemic.

“We truly like our jobs, and to lose them now in a time of such hardship with the virus is utterly heartbreaking,” said Lisa.

Gallery union rep Anna

said, “The Tate bosses try to tell us that we are all a family and a community of artists. But really they are the same as any capitalist business that doesn't value their workers.”

Hamish added, “The top bosses earn upwards of £100,000 a year. They say they are going to take a tiny pay cut, but that's a joke—they should do more and save our jobs.”

Workers at Tate Modern gathered outside the staff entrance for a picket and counted out loud the number of staff facing redundancy—which currently stands at 313.

They then marched to outside the Tate's Turbine Hall and held a rally chanting, “Coronavirus—not an excuse to fire us.”

Union members want 10 percent of the £7 million bailout to be used to save the jobs. They planned to strike on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday this week and then indefinitely from next Monday.

Workers' names have been changed

●Mass protest—Saturday 22 August, 11.30am–3.13pm, Tate Modern main entrance

●For solidarity details go to [Agitate](https://www.agitate.org.uk) on Facebook

●Donate to the strike fund at bit.ly/TateStrike

UNIVERSITIES

University workers resist mass job cuts

UCU UNION members held protests and an online rally on Thursday of last week over job cuts.

Workers at Soas University of London gathered to oppose 150 job cuts. Unison and UCU union members there are balloting for strikes.

UCU president Vicky Blake told the online rally that people had to “fight for every job as if it was our own job”.

Yasmin from Soas student union said students “are completely behind staff”.

“This is disproportionately affecting women of colour,

LGBTQ+ members of our community, black teachers,” she said. “We urge you to take action.”

UCU member Peta brought solidarity from a Liverpool protest to the online rally.

Robyn from the University of Sheffield said workers there face “dismissal and re-engagement on worse terms and conditions”.

“Universities are hiding behind claims of deficits,” she said. “My university has doubled its savings target to £200 million. Why? Because they're trying to justify attacks on staff.”

She added, “Local

branches are fighting for their lives. But what's missing is a central campaign.”

George Bruce from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh said “people on precarious contracts and with protected characteristics” are being targeted. “This is not down to Covid,” he said. “It's down to a long term mismanagement and drive to marketise universities.”

At Kent university, an e-ballot on whether to ballot for strikes over compulsory redundancies, saw 84 percent vote yes on a 51 percent turnout. **Sadie Robinson**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Tower Hamlets strikes back against attacks

>>>>from back page

to support each other during the strike,” she said.

On Whitechapel Road, strikers occupied the street and stopped traffic. A heavy police presence, including two on horseback, eventually forced strikers to stand on the pavement to hear speakers.

Roz is a manager of a day centre and has been conducting home visits throughout the lockdown.

She said workers had been “pushed into a corner” by the Biggs administration's insistence on deploying Tower Rewards.

“It was difficult organising a strike in a pandemic but it felt absolutely necessary. It's a Labour council basically

implementing Tory rules—it's outrageous.”

The workers' strike ballot runs out this week—and the key question is whether they will ballot for more action.

Petra, who has worked for the council for 25 years, said she was fighting because, “It's not fair what's going on, it's like the managers are laughing but our pay grades are going down all the time.”

“I love being on strike to show them we are serious. If more people got involved then it will be much better.

“We need to get together, fight together and show these people we're serious.”

“I'm enjoying the strike 100 percent, I haven't got anything to lose.”

Around 1,500 Unison members are striking—but the changes affect thousands more across three other unions.

GMB and NEU union members returned overwhelming votes for action, but they are yet to walk out.

And 19 months into the dispute, the Unite union claims to be organising a strike ballot soon.

Strikers have shown great bravery.

They have proven to every trade unionist, every worker—and every boss—that it is still possible to resist.

Unison at every level should be stepping up support for the Tower Hamlets struggle—and Labour should be ashamed of the role it is playing.

NHS PAY REVOLT CAN BEAT TORIES

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEVANS

HEALTH WORKERS plan rallies outside hospitals across Britain on Wednesday of next week to demand a pay rise.

The rallies are the latest action in a grassroots revolt over the Tories' pay insult.

Some public sector workers were small awarded increases in July. But health workers weren't included, despite all the plaudits they received for their work during the coronavirus crisis.

A day of action at the beginning of the month saw thousands take to the streets across Britain. This included a 2,000-strong march in London and hundreds more out in towns and cities across Britain.

Jordan, an occupational therapist who joined the march in London, says she "feels optimistic that we have a chance to win something".

"We had a good sized group from our hospital," she told Socialist Worker, "and some of the people who had come with us had never been on a protest before."

"Afterwards I've had a couple of people come up to



LONDON HEALTH workers marching earlier this month for better pay after the coronavirus peak

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

me to say they had seen me there or had heard me speak.

"So there were more of us there than the group that went."

Jordan added, "The mood in general is supportive of the campaign. I went around all the wards and got some other activists that I met before to

join in the day of action. As I was walking around, I met another three people who wanted to help out."

The upcoming day of action is a chance to spread the NHS pay revolt.

Health workers at St Thomas' plan a rally outside the hospital, which

sits directly across the Thames opposite parliament.

Activists at the hospital fired the first shot in the revolt with a 1,500-strong march on Downing Street at the end of last month.

Next week some workers at other hospitals in London plan to go to St Thomas' after

holding their own rallies. The Unison union in Scotland has called pay protests at hospitals on Tuesday around the theme "clapping doesn't pay our bills".

The union is calling on the Scottish government to reopen the last pay deal, and for ministers to sit down with

trade unions to discuss a pay rise now for all NHS staff.

Ministers say that the NHS is in the middle of a three-year pay deal which is raising pay by 6.5 percent.

But that "rise" never made it to health workers' pockets. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Unison leaderships helped the Tories con people into thinking they would get more than they did.

That deal came on the back of a ten-year pay freeze which has led to up to a 20 percent real terms pay cut.

The unions are now divided over what to demand.

Unison is calling for a £2,000 rise for all health workers "as soon as possible".

Meanwhile the RCN is supporting a 12.5 percent rise, which for nursing grades will be higher than Unison's claim.

Activists involved in the pay revolt are demanding 15 percent—and are fighting to win it now.

Every trade unionist, socialist and campaigner should throw themselves behind the fight for NHS pay.

A win for the health workers would make it easier for everyone to fight back against the Tories and bosses.

COUNCILS

After nine days of action, Tower Hamlets strike still strong

COUNCIL workers in Tower Hamlets, east London, finished their latest round of strikes on Monday. They defiantly marched through the borough to demand their Labour council call off its attacks.

Hundreds of strikers marched through the streets and converged at the site of the council's new headquarters in the Whitechapel area.

Social worker Linda said, "I've been shielding since February and it's taken quite a lot for me to come out. But I felt too



Strikers on the streets of Tower Hamlets, east London, this week

isolated at home. I'm a steward and I've always been on a picket line."

Strikers have held nine days of walkouts against the Tower Rewards scheme—a new contract with worse terms and conditions forcibly imposed on 4,000 workers in July.

Allowances

Tower Rewards, pushed by Labour mayor John Biggs, attacks workers' travel allowances, severance pay, flexitime scheme and pay increments.

Social worker Siobhan

was picketing outside Mile End hospital, her workplace on Monday morning. She said she was looking forward to "showing our true force" at the central strike rally.

"There's power in numbers," she told Socialist Worker.

A Unison-sponsored ad van slamming Biggs drove around the borough on strike days, causing cheers to erupt from picket lines as it circled round Tower Hamlets.

Roz, who works in an adult mental health team, said working during the

pandemic was difficult but, "We've pulled together to make the service work."

"The fact that we're getting a slap in the face for doing this, it feels like we're not valued," she said.

Heather said, "We're not just doing this for us. We're doing this for people who live in the borough as well. We want to protect their services, and protect their workforce."

Siobhan agreed. "The community came together to support one another in the pandemic, the staff have come together

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